

Summer Internships Are a Win for Students and Boeing Field

By Bradley Gatheridge, Rob Shafer and Chaim Van Prooyen

King County International Airport/Boeing Field (BFI) has been invigorated by youthful energy coming from three undergraduate interns spending their summer working in the Airport Operations & Compliance Section. Each intern is pursuing an aviation related college degree, but all have varying interests in the industry. The intern trio is composed of Chaim Van Prooyen, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Bradley Gatheridge, University of North Dakota, and Rob Shafer, Green River Community College.

The interns were tasked with various projects and assisted in coordinating Airport events such as the arrival of Air Force One and the Blue Angels. By working in Airport Operations, they gained a solid foundation of what is required to ensure a safe and secure operating environment.

Chaim, who is striving to be an airport director, got a feel for operating a mixed-use airport of general aviation, commercial and cargo aircraft operators. Chaim spent last summer interning at Oakland International Airport in the planning department and by spending this summer at BFI, he is on his way to achieving his goal. One of Chaim's notable projects this summer is his analyses of airport rates and charges with the goal of finding escaping revenue. Essentially, he collected and analyzed data on aircraft landing fees to determine whether commercial aircraft operators were being properly charged.

For Rob, the internship at BFI is his first aviation job. He has been amazed that the concepts he studied in his airport management classes have come to life working in the operations department. He devoted his expertise to the Airport's recently launched Fly Quiet Program. This program is designed to address aircraft noise over Seattle's most noise sensitive neighborhoods. Additionally, Rob worked with the Airport Noise Officer and the FAA to revise visual flight procedures at the Airport. They coordinated the distribution of pilot education materials at local flight schools, FBOs, and at local community events.

Already an accomplished pilot with many of his pilot ratings in place, this internship is Bradley's first step in the aviation business. Brad wants to fly the skies as a commercial pilot when he graduates, but wants a degree to accompany his pilot license. One of the most notable projects that Bradley took the lead on this summer is the development of an airport terminal ramp safety and operations plan. Intended for Airport use, the plan covers everything from airline operations to passenger processing to ground equipment storage.

The interns were provided a unique opportunity when nearby McChord Air Force Base diverted flights for troop and equipment movements during several weeks of temporary runway closure for their airfield repair. Brad led the charge under the direction of Airport Operations staff. Troop movements required planning the location of parking for buses and planes, the facility accommodations for troops, and the detailed coordination of schedules. When the mission started, Chaim and Rob joined in to make the operation run

efficiently and safely. All three interns enjoyed the experience stating, "It can't get much better than working next to a Boeing 757 or DC-10!" They also felt a tremendous responsibility to the hundreds of young soldiers, most just about their age, being deployed overseas on these flights.

Always a busy Airport with frequent special visitors, the highlight and most memorable experience of the summer internship was the arrival at Boeing Field of President George Bush in Air Force One. According to Brad and Chaim, "It was a great honor to be a part of the operation planning with the AF1 Advance Team and Secret Service. It is very interesting to see the planning and coordination of so many people for such an important visit. It was an amazing experience. Only a very few people get to see the behind the scenes efforts involved in a Presidential visit and be so close to that specially marked 747 aircraft. It was truly an experience that not one of us will forget. Seeing the President of the United States arrive at "our" Airport is an experience that is hard to describe."

What is the best thing about working in Airport Operations? It has been a great opportunity to work with so many enthusiastic and interesting people! They learned how many different people and skills are involved in running an airport, interfaced with staff at each of the airlines and local FBO's, and worked with the dedicated people who operate BFI Tower, not to mention seeing some of the finest aircraft in the world pull up in front of our office window.

The internship gave each intern valuable experience in airport operations. They gained a wealth of knowledge that each will be able to draw from during the upcoming school year and to take with them into their careers in aviation.

King County International Airport/Boeing Field was the beneficiary of hard working temporary help during an unusually busy summer season. They also were reenergized by the enthusiasm displayed from students who are excited about their future careers in aviation. With any luck, our paths will cross again.